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MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Deputy Director (Support)

SUBJECT: Rating of Records Discipline on Fitness Reports

1. There has been sporadic discussion in the past about the desirability of including the concept of Records Discipline among the qualifications to be rated periodically in Fitness Reports. Since the fitness report form is currently being redrafted, the Records Committee of the Clandestine Services, at its meeting of 23 April 1958, took up this issue and gave me its unanimous recommendation in favor of this step.

2. Our reasoning is this. Our professional work has two aspects: current action and later retrieval of the written record. Our stress over the years of the first element, and inadequate concern with the second, have had a concrete and adverse effect on the shape of Clandestine Services records, as the review which has been under way since last September has shown rather alarmingly.

3. The root of the matter is the state of records discipline among our employees. By records discipline we mean the awareness, and intelligent interpretation and application, of procedures governing the creation and maintenance of written materials which must be retrievable when needed -- and only when needed -- without waste motion. In order to assemble a high quality record of our operations and information, this discipline must be implanted in every intelligence officer and his professional and clerical helpers.

4. The concept of records discipline thus is as essential a quality to be rated by superiors as, for example, security consciousness. The objection most often heard to rating it is that it will not apply to all employees throughout the Agency. This is, of course, true, but it should be pointed out that "effective writing", which is to be rated, applies to far fewer of our personnel. This is not to argue that effective writing should not be a part of the Fitness Report, but merely to suggest that "records discipline" along with "effective writing" can easily be marked not applicable, whenever this is the case.

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Chief of Operations, DD/P

cc: Members of CS Records Committee

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